856 731 757 854 mouthful to drink, then dip her finger into the medecine and let two or three drops fall from it on the fontanella ; then she spits on the lower part of the shell and presses it all along the sternum of the baby as far as the navel. This is said to "nurse the child, to make him grow." Should he be sick, this treatment will be repeated many times a day. If he is well and goes about with his mother, she will pour the *milombyana* into the small calabash and give him a few sups from it from time to time.

853 271 2/84 The child must never drink ordinary water, but only the *milombyana* decoction. It is a taboo. Should the mother travel far from home and leave behind her the *milombyana* pot, she is allowed to add some water to the calabash, but she must always leave a little of the decoction in the calabash before doing so. The mother herself is not allowed to drink the water of another country. She must only drink water from home and, if she is forced to travel, she must take a little powder from the reed each time she drinks, so that the child may become familiarised with that country (1). These laws must be kept during all the nursing period.

862 The child begins to eat *solid food* as soon as his teeth are cut, and when he is able to take it with his own hands. But some people do not like to give it to him too soon, as they say his stools become fetid. When later on he is able to go outside and to take care of himself, then he can eat any ordinary food.

853 If the mother dies during the nursing period, the little one is almost sure to follow her. The baby is fed with goat's or cow's milk, but the Natives do not know that they must add water to it ; sooner or later therefore the child dies of enteritis.

I have heard of some cases in which another woman has taken charge of the child, nursed him with her own milk and weaned him successfully ; her own child being older, she weaned him earlier than the usual time and nursed the other child in his

261 4/84 (1) A similar custom is observed in the case of moving from one country to another. When a Ronga comes back from Kimberley having found a wife there, both bring with them a little of the earth of the place they are leaving, and the woman must eat a little of it every day in her porridge in order to accustom herself to her new abode. This earth provides the transition between the two domiciles !

881 the water and must remain in it a long time till the sun appears.
271 The shepherds prevent them from coming out. This is also said to help the wound to heal. (Valdo).

Thirst. It is absolutely forbidden to drink a drop of water during the whole initiation, and this taboo is said to be very painful. Boys sometimes succeed, during their hunting trips, in enticing their shepherds in one direction and in the meantime some of them escape and go to the river to drink. They will be severely punished if caught!

522 881 *Unsavoury food.* The law is that women, the mothers of the circumcised, must bring plenty of porridge, twice as much as is required for the boys. Should one of them fail to do this she will be punished at a given time. They deposit their pots at some distance, so that they cannot catch any glimpse of the Ngoma, and shout: "Ha tsoo! We are burning." This means: "Our heads are sore from having carried our pots such a long way." Shepherds run to meet them and answer with a great many jokes in rather dubious taste: "We know what is burning with you, etc." Is not this the rule of the Ngoma? The shepherds bring back with them the empty pots of the day before which the women take back to their homes. Should one of them have provided too little food, her pot will be filled with long grass, and when she goes home with her comrades, they will make fun of her. If she does not learn to do better, the "Mother of the Ngoma" will organise a punitive expedition to her village, and kill goats and fowls, and thus make her obey.

881 All the food is placed on the reed tables, and must be eaten by the boys without any seasoning. Should the indulgent mothers have brought some ground nut sauce, it will be confiscated and eaten by the men. When they hear the order: "Tshai goma," the candidates must rush to the tables, kneel down, and, at the word "Thari," seize the food with both hands and swallow it as quickly as possible. If they delay, they are beaten by the shepherds who superintend the meal. When one batch of boys has finished, they must rush to another table where other boys are still struggling with their heap of porridge and help them to finish their portions. Owing to this emulation, the meal does not last

262 however, answers admirably to the wants and capacities of the Native stomach! When the bupsa of the previous day has undergone too much fermentation during the night, it is given to
[264] the dogs. A small supplementary meal is often cooked at midday : a plate of vegetables, for instance. Or, if the pangs of hunger are too keenly felt, a little nfuma meal (p. 17) is eaten with honey. Any addition of this kind to the ordinary every day fare is welcome!

There are a few other preparations made from cereals : the *mbila*, raw meal mixed with water, the *ntlatu*, a lighter kind of maize flour used for invalids, the *shimhimbi* made of Kafir corn which is the special dish for women who are more or less fasting during the confinement period (I. p. 42).

Thongas also know how to cook by steaming. They put a large plate (mbenga, mu-mi) on top of the pot and hermetically seal it with ox dung. This prevents the steam from escaping. Dung is a thing by no means to be avoided in the culinary art. They look upon it as quite clean (1).

Men have now become accustomed to ordinary ground mealie meal *(mugayo)* which Europeans use extensively as porridge in South Africa. They eat it in the mines and in the schools ; but women do not touch it and think it vastly inferior to their own *bupsa*.

As regards the husks they are called *budangwana*, a word which may mean : "that which is eaten by the dogs." They are given to the dogs, the pigs, and the fowls.

We shall see in the next paragraph how milk and meat are dealt with.

III. *Drink*.

● 271 Natives are fond of the fresh clear water (mati) running in the spruits of the Transvaal, but they also make use of the

(1) I remember on one of the Transvaal roads, meeting two converts of a German colleague returning from an evangelisation tour. I offered them a piece of bread, for which they were very thankful and they moved on some distance to eat it by themselves. I was much struck to see them, after having said grace, pick up a large piece of dried ox dung which was lying there and place their bread upon it before eating : they evidently thought it was much cleaner than the bare ground!

whitish, greyish mixture found in the pools, in the midst of the sandy hollows, or in the neighbourhood of the lakes, in the Delagoa plain. To drink from a pot, or from a river, lying on your belly, or kneeling down, is *ku nwa*. But there is another word, *ku kapitela*, which describes the manner of drinking adopted in olden times by the warriors of Gideon, and of which the Thongas have not lost the secret. The Book of Judges tells the story of the 500 "who lapped, putting their hands to their mouths" (VII, 6). When crossing a spruit, you will often see Thongas drinking by throwing water into their mouths with a rapid upward motion of the hand. I had never properly understood Gideon's story until I saw a Thonga drinking by *kapitela*. 271

But the Thonga kitchen provides the tribe with many other drinks. They can be divided into 3 categories : drinks made from cereals, from fruits or from other ingredients. From cereals are made the buputju, madleko, byala and mpheka ; from fruits, the bukanye, buhimbi ; the busura, made from the sap of the palm tree, also belongs to this group. In the third category, I may mention the shiwayawaya and shikokiyane. 273

1) *Drinks made from cereals.* Under the name of *Kafir beer* are generally comprised all the varieties of intoxicating drinks prepared from mealies, millet, sorghum. But these varieties differ greatly, according to the proportion of alcohol they contain. There is a light beer called buputju and madleko and a strong beer, the byala proper, and mpheka.

The *buputju* (corresponding to the Sutho *leting*) is brewed in the following manner : a little bupsa of mealies is cooked and ground (sila) in a plate together with Kafir corn yeast. Water is poured on the mixture and fermentation soon sets in. After one day it can be consumed ; its taste is agreeable and it is hardly intoxicating (Mboza). This was the old-fashioned way of preparing buputju, and it is probably what the Ba-Ronga called *madleko*. Maize madleko looks like a thick oatmeal soup. The recipe in Shiluvane is somewhat different : mealie flour is placed in a pot, with cold water, and stirred. This mixture is poured into another pot of hot water and boiled. It is then left to cool and some Kafir corn yeast is mixed with it in the evening. Next